1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Attitudes and Beliefs about Nature

The Greek people, as one would expect of individuals everywhere, vary considerably in their attitude toward the physical environment.[3] Some, completely oblivious to the beauty about them, nevertheless try to read the weather signs in order to know when they should plow or sow. Some, at the other extreme, show a deep sensitivity to the changing moods of nature, as, for example, the illiterate shepherd in the Boeotian village of Schematari who would take pencil and paper and lovingly draw a tree-filled landscape or the rising sun. Most of the Greek villagers, however, seem to fall between these two extremes; from time to time they, in the words of one peasant, "gain an optimism in life when they see the beauty of a nice slope of the mountain or a lovely dawn." On the whole, the world seems a friendly place and there are few things to fear at the hands of nature.

More than this, the world is in God's hands. The frequent reference to God in popular speech may be a cultural trait handed down from generation to generation, but some of the oft-repeated, time-honored phrases are said with such animation and with such a light in the eye that they must express the individual feeling of those using them. There is no counterpart in English to the common phrase *Chara Theou* (Joy of God), which combines not only rapture and active enjoyment but the sense of the sparkling light God sheds on the earth. During the spectacular Greek spring, this phrase is a most appropriate way of describing one's feeling.

Even those who are not very conscious of their natural surroundings from day to day miss them deeply when distant from them. Over and over again, returned emigrants in Greek villages gave as the reason for their departure from America their need to see the mountains or plains or the sea on which their eyes had rested while they grew up.

Much of this feeling toward nature is based on the sense of intimacy with her.[4] Indeed, one of the first requirements in trying to understand the life of any people is to learn their reaction and adjustment to the natural world. The Greek farmer studies nature for important signs which tell him whether to bring the flock in from the high hillside, whether to start or delay a journey, whether to put out his tobacco plants. Those signs directly relating weather to agriculture are obvious and easily understood by the Westerner, if not always accepted as scientifically valid. But the signs which natural objects and events provide of the supernatural — illness and death, the appearance of ghosts, or even the way the universe was made and is run — all of these stretch the imagination of the scientifically trained specialist, who may be inclined to dismiss them as superstition and therefore unimportant. Nevertheless, they continue to be important to many Greek villagers, young and old alike.

In listening to folk interpretations of nature, one also learns much about

1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

horsefly, he will put it in his wallet for good luck. Or if he is returning from the field and sees two crows quarreling while flying high over a house, he will be reminded of the belief that either the husband or the wife in that house will die soon. If he sees a crow pass in front of him from right to left, he will consider it a good omen; but if from left to right, he will expect bad luck. Should a rabbit or snake be in the path ahead, the peasant knows he must walk on in a straight line; should the road turn to the right or left, then the individual had better return home and start the journey the following day.

A spider walking on you will bring good luck, but if you come upon two snakes fighting and eating each other, a close relation of yours will die. Should you be a shepherd in the Vardousia Mountains of Central Greece, you would probably believe that the wild goats which graze in herds are guarded by the devil and that is why one can hear them make a whistling noise. Furthermore, these wild goats have the same notches cut in their ears as the tame ones kept by the shepherds, which to these mountaineers is proof positive that the devil must be the one who puts the markings there.

Seeing some insect or animal may bring to mind a story learned when a child. The bee, for instance, was once as white as cotton. When Adam and Eve met the devil in the Garden of Eden, it was the bee that saw them first and flew immediately to tell God the news. The devil, who was then holding a burning torch in his hand, ran and tried to catch the bee to keep her from her mission. He could not reach her, but as she was nearing God the devil from afar threw the flaming torch at her. The fire singed her so that she became black. God, who saw all of this, ordered the human beings to burn in the churches only the candles made from beeswax since the bee had proven to be the purest creature of all. I am often asked if these folk beliefs (cited here and in later sections of this book) are widely held or are only the relic in the mind of some aged person. It is safe to say that almost all of them are very much alive at the conversational level. People are aware of them, talk about them. Obviously, many act on them, while others do not. But they are a part of the general atmosphere, as is the belief common in America that a person should not walk under a ladder.

Such beliefs, stories, and personal experiences with many kinds of plants and animals reinforce the rural Greek's sense of intimacy with nature, which develops because of his constant exposure to the elements in the course of his daily life. The Greek peasant, like many farmers elsewhere, moves through a living landscape with which he communicates.

The same holds true for his view of the cosmos and the movement of the heavenly bodies.[1] One of the simplest and clearest descriptions of the latter is taken from an account of a village prepared by a singing master in

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

whom they will marry. This is done by associating the verse being sung with the girl whose forfeit is drawn from the pitcher or jar at that particular time.

To call attention, however, to the major holy days is to overlook the importance of the minor holy days in regulating much of the life of the older villager who is still apt to be tradition-bound. For example, on July 2, the Day of the Virgin the Sheafbearer, many peasants will not harvest for fear that any sheaves they would gather would be destroyed by fire; or on July 7, the Day of St. Kyriaki, peasant women in many parts of Greece will not bake bread for fear that it will be eaten by snakes; or on July 17, the Day of St. Marina, the people go to the vineyards to collect grapes. On this same day they may make a public sacrifice of a calf, letting the animal's blood run in a special ditch; they follow this sacrifice with a common meal. On July 20, the Day of the Prophet Elijah (Elias), there are also festivals and sacrifices, chiefly because so many churches are named in his honor. Some people go to worship on the mountaintops; others try to foretell the weather since Elijah is associated with rain and thunder; and still others light fires on the mountainsides or in the villages.

Thus one could run through each month. There are dates when livestock owners can begin to let their animals pasture freely in fields and vineyards (September 14), when master and servants are supposed to draw up the contract between them (October 26), when the wine cask is to be opened (November 3 or 11), when agricultural work is to be finished for the year (November 14), when the fountain is to be fed with seeds (November 21), when the icons are to be dipped into the sea (December 6).[4] Each of these dates in and of itself is perhaps not very significant, for the taboos and customs are of a relatively simple sort; but they do illustrate the rich heritage of folklore which surrounds every village, day in and day out, and which adds to the color and vividness of rural life in Greece.

These saints' days also afford the basis for the custom of observing namedays. In Greece, a person and his family pay little attention to his birthday but make much of the day of the saint whose name he bears. In Amphypolis, for instance, on a boy's nameday his parents will sacrifice a lamb. They will sing and dance and afterwards feast on the lamb because, as one village girl expressed it, "each boy belongs to a certain saint and the lamb is for the saint." Throughout Greece one visits a friend on his nameday, enjoys the good food that is served, and wishes the individual long life and happiness. In a village where there are many people named Constantine or George, people go from one party to another until they have had more than enough food and drink.

The greatest holidays of the year are Christmas and Easter, with the latter being the more important. As a matter of fact, Christmas is only one part of the so-called Twelve Days (*Dodekaemeron*) between Christmas

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

the Gospel and the cross is brought out to the center of the church where people can kiss it, place flowers before it, and show their sorrow over the crucifixion which has been called to their mind. Eggs are dyed red on this day, which is sometimes called Red Thursday, thus symbolizing the blood of Christ.

Good Friday is a holy day on which no one works. The women pick flowers with which to decorate the holy shroud (*Epitaphios*) or sacred icon. All day long the coffeehouses are closed and the people abstain from alcoholic drinks, olives, fish roe, or leavened bread. The evening church service lasts from eight to midnight. One of its features is the carrying of the flower-bedecked Epitaphios in a sacred funeral procession through the streets of the village. The priests in their rich robes, the altar boys, and the congregation walk solemnly as though they were actually burying their Lord. The procession goes around the church before the simulated bier is brought to rest before the church door at such a height that the worshippers can pass under it into the church, crossing themselves as they do so.

On Saturday members of the household prepare the Paschal lamb. A few attend the services from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., but almost everybody attends the evening service. The bells summon the people at 11 P.M. and by 11:30 the congregation has gathered. At midnight, when the sacred fire supposedly descends from heaven and the glorious Easter hymn *Christos Aneste* bursts forth in joy, people hurry to light their candles, shoot off the firecrackers they have brought for the purpose, and greet each other with *Christos aneste* (Christ is risen) and expect the answer *Alethos aneste* (Risen indeed). The service may continue to daybreak, but many of the people go home much earlier, each carrying his lighted taper with him. Upon arriving at the house, the worshipper uses the taper to smudge a black cross on the lintel. In some villages it is customary earlier in the day to make a cross on the door from the blood of the Paschal lamb. Once back home, the family ends the long Lenten fast by eating the red-dyed Easter eggs and *mageirites*, a highly seasoned stew made of the lamb's visceral organs. The lamb, which has not been sufficiently roasted on the spit, is eaten later in the day, not only by the members of the family but by the many guests and relatives who have come back to the village from their homes in the city.

All of Monday and the afternoon of Tuesday following Easter are considered national holidays. By Wednesday people can get back to their regular tasks. Religious ceremonies and festivals have added a meaningful dimension to their lives and have reminded them of the long continuity which links them with their ancestors who, as they see it, became the guardians and proponents of pristine Christianity, which lives on in their own Orthodox Church.

1:Sanders Z-5\ (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

879 The official purpose of the various courses included in the high-school curriculum shows intent if not actual accomplishment:

[771] *Religion.* To convey a clear understanding of the moral works of Christ and of the Orthodox Church; to instill a proper respect for these works and thus elevate the students' religious and moral spirit so that it will become the major factor in their individual and social life. (Twelve hours total over six years.)

TABLE 6. CURRICULUM FOR BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL, WITH HOURS ALLOTTED PER SUBJECT

Subject	Class hours by grades per week						Total (per subject)
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
Religion	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Ancient Greek	8	8	8	9	9	9	51
Modern Greek	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
Latin			3	3	3	3	12
French	4	3	3	3	2	2	17
History	3	3	3	3	2	4	18
Mathematics	3	4	3	3	4	5	22
Science	3	3	3	3	3	4	19
Geography	2	2	2	1	1		8
Hygiene					1		1
Handicrafts	2	2	1	1	1		7
Singing	2	2	1	1			6
Philosophy					2	2	4
Physical education	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
Total class hours (per week)	35	35	35	35	36	37	213

Ancient Greek. To familiarize the students with the writings of the ancient Greeks; teach them a reading knowledge and understanding of ancient Greek, as well as the ability to write in the Attic dialect. Give them an appreciation of ancient life and its thoughts in order to better understand modern Greek. Better to appreciate good writing by reading selected texts of ancient Greek authors. Study of ancient civilizations so as to better understand our own age. (Fifty-one hours.)

[619] *Modern Greek* (*katharevousa*). Spoken and written use of Greek language; improvement of the students' literary education; leads to a greater understanding of modern Greek civilization and enhances students' national awareness. (Eighteen hours.)

Latin. To learn the Latin language in order to understand the work and thought of ancient Latin writers; to understand and appreciate the Roman civilization. (Twelve hours.)

1:Sanders Z-5,[illegible] (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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XIV

Religion and the Greek Peasant

77 / The Greek villager's religion, a special blend of classical Greek paganism and Christianity, illustrates the capacity of Greek culture to absorb a new religious force, early Christianity, in such a way as to preserve unbroken continuity. The discussion of "Orthodoxy and Greekness" which follows bears upon this point. Yet, despite its antiquity and the accretions of past ages, Greek religion, while imposing a certain discipline through fasts and obligatory ceremonies, always managed to avoid becoming simply a burdensome set of obligations. It did so by the typically Greek device of finding a light touch in the midst of solemnity. The village priest, whose role is described in some detail, has for many centuries furnished unwittingly the necessary comic relief, although often capable in times of extremity of providing inspiring leadership.

At the same time, Greek religion is also humane, responding to need and affliction through individual action rather than through organized charitable institutions. The section on "The Bishop of Messenia and His Good Works" shows what one imaginative individual can do. Greek religion also reveals its practical side in its confrontation of death and calamity. The somber shades of war, pestilence, and oppression are not strangers to sunny Greece, and the Greek religion teaches people how to face such misfortunes stoically and with dignity.

1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Although a rare Puritan strain appears now and then, Greek religion is also supposed to be fun, as any attendance at a religious festival will show. In fact, most religious occasions provide an excuse for merriment, even during the ceremonies. To the uninitiated such behavior borders on the irreverent, but the Greek might well argue that joy and even levity should prove as pleasing to God as assumed sorrow or feigned piety. Indeed, festivals are as old as Greek religion itself, with each carrying its own sacramental message to be expressed in dance as well as in formal liturgy. But religious expression is not confined to formal occasions; it permeates the daily life of the people, as we shall see.

Orthodoxy and Greekness

To start any discussion of religion and the Greek peasant, it is necessary to state clearly and unequivocally that adherence to the official religion of Greece, the Greek Orthodox Church, is tantamount to being Greek. Only 2 to 3 percent of the population of the country are not members of the Orthodox Church. Though those comprising this small fraction may have political citizenship, may speak the Greek tongue, and may take pride in the legacy of ancient Greece, they are at best suspect Greeks if they do not nominally at least belong to the Orthodox Church.

But what is the syncretism that is called Orthodoxy? This question can be answered on at least two levels: first, that of the peasant and, second, that of the educated Greek. To the peasant, the coming of Christianity did not mean an important break with many of his previous practices, beliefs, and even deities. What were formerly deities became saints, with some of the more powerful deities becoming identified with the most powerful saints, such as the Holy Virgin. It seemed perfectly fitting and not at all surprising to find an old, old church dedicated to St. Theodore in the southern Peloponnesos, two of whose columns were from an ancient pre-Christian temple standing on their original pediments. Many scholars have described in considerable detail various aspects of this easy transition from pagan to Christian worship.[1] William Miller, a keen student of Greek life, has pointed out that the saints play a very important part in Greek life: their functions and names often prove that they are the legitimate descendants of the old Greek gods, the new religion having been grafted on to the old. He indicates that Helios, the sun god, has been succeeded by the Prophet Elias (Elijah), whose chapels crown almost every eminence in Greece; the Virgin has replaced Athena Parthenos, and the Parthenon in the Middle Ages was the Church of St. Mary, whether as a Greek Cathedral or as a Latin minster; St. Dionysios has dethroned Dionysis; St. George and the Dragon are the Christian version of Theseus and the Minotaur, so that the Theseum naturally became in Christian times the Church of St. George.[2]

Marcu Beza, who describes many pagan survivals with Christian names

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

the icon of Christ is on his right and that of St. John the Baptist next to it. To his left one sees on the altar the icon of the Virgin, and farther to the left the icon of the saint for whom the church was named.

The congregation stands during the service, except for a few infirm who can lean against supports along the wall; there is no instrumental music, as the priest and the chanter carry the service themselves in a language that much of the time is unintelligible to the worshippers. The gospels are read in Koine, or New Testament Greek, and the liturgy, written by St. John Chrysostom toward the end of the fourth century, is in the Greek of that period. When the priest delivers a sermon, he uses his version of katharevousa, if he is sufficiently schooled; otherwise, he speaks in demotike. Apparently the worshippers are moved by the ceremony, the procession, the swinging censers, and the chanting even more than by the actual meaning of the words to which they listen. Now and then in the liturgy, however, come familiar passages which most can understand because of having learned their meaning in school or from some relative.

The worshippers, among whom small children may be running or tugging, include very few men. They come out for special festival services but show no interest in the regular Sunday-morning service, which is viewed as the woman's social hour. Even during the service women catch up on the latest happenings throughout the village.

The priest, however, is busy at other times, too. Dorothy Lee describes it this way:

> Religion permeates Greek life, punctuating it with ritual. No Greek, urban or rural, would think of initiating anything important without a religious inauguration. Schools open with the inaugurative *agiasmos*, "making holy"; the foundation stone of every house is laid with *agiasmos;* merchants begin new undertakings with the proper religious inauguration. On Epiphany, the sea is made holy for those who journey on it. In the country, blessed water is carried from the Epiphany Mass to sprinkle on the fields. The Virgin and the Saints are invoked, but not mainly as correctives; their main function is to endow an undertaking with good and success, it is not primarily to prevent or correct. . . . Priests are called in, and Saints and the Virgin invoked, also, when difficulties arise. Vows are made for the recovery of a loved one; the priest is called when the family has had a run of misfortune, to "make holy" and exorcise the evil. Priests conduct a rain litany to break a drought.[13]

The parish as such consists of no such array of organized groups as comprise an American congregation; the priest is not trying to convert the unbeliever or change the daily life of his people. He is there to help them meet life's emergencies, to instill a love for their religion and their country, and to act as peacemaker when disputes threaten the harmony of the community.[14]

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

committed humanists and assume that once these traits are developed each man will have the strength to face life and its *vasana* (trials and pains). Since they believe that children, by virtue of being human, have these traits inherently, the family's obligation lies in developing the traits to the point where the child, when he becomes an adult, can fend for himself. But until he is capable of independence in this regard he is especially vulnerable, and he is both subjected to the strains which parallel those he will have as an adult and also bolstered by the protective sheltering devices which supplement his own gradually developing abilities.

The process of caring for infants even during the first four months of their lives furnishes illustrations. Vasilika's infants are dressed in diapers and shirts and are than wrapped, with their legs straightened and their arms held down at their side, first in several blankets and then in swaddling bands. The result is a firm but not tight enclosure of the entire baby except for his neck and his head. Mothers explain that the swaddling is meant for the physical protection of the infant against cold and against objects which might hurt him. They also explain that only by restraint of the infant's random movements will he be able to grow straight legs and back.

But when one watches a mother wrap her infant and sees her make the sign of the cross three times with her fist over the baby before putting the swaddling bands on, and when one sees her make a spitting gesture three times toward the infant before placing on the swaddling band itself the blue bead that is supposed to protect against the evil eye, it becomes clear that the process of wrapping an infant is meant to provide a spiritually protective enclosure too.

Babies' helplessness makes them especially penetrable to the evil forces of human envy and under these circumstances external spiritual or even magical forces are believed to be necessary. Children up to adolescence are considered vulnerable, as we have seen, and this is expressed, among other ways, in the encouragement they get to participate in the formal religion of the village. They are brought to some church services as infants (except that both mother and infant are secluded at home and are specifically prohibited from entering the church for the first forty days after birth) and by the time they are three years old, children can stand quietly near an older member of their family through the entire two-hour Sunday liturgy. Parents encourage their children to join the young girls of the village in the Good Friday and Easter preparations as part of an expressed expectation that it will be good for their health. Fractious or complaining children, even when not ill, are thought to be suffering from the effects of the evil eye and may be taken to the priest for a special individual blessing to help dispel the influence.

As we have seen in connection with the blessing of a new house and its permanent sacred corner, God's protection and man's pleas for His grace continue as an accepted part of the life of the adults of the village. Here we may add briefly that this remains true even though adult men attend church services less frequently than women and ritual abstinences during Lent and similar formal requirements of the Greek Orthodox Church are not rigidly or systematically ad-

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959); EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

hered to. Vasilika is a settlement in which there is some grumbling about, and some disregard of, the formal requirements of the Church as an institution; but God Himself, *"O papus apano,"* "the grandfather above," as He is sometimes affectionately called, is felt to be close, real, and not wholly inscrutable. He is an omnipresent force in the lives of men. Such phrases as *"Echi o theos,"* "God has (the wherewithal to provide)," fall easily from the villagers' lips as does the attribution to God, rather than to nature as an abstraction, of common physical phenomena: *"Vrechi o theos,"* "God is raining." The magical and spiritual protection which is available for children, then, continues to be available to adults but is considered less necessary and takes on a more formal religious guise.

Adult-Child Relationships

Let us return now to some of the strains that children are under. There are, of course, the ordinary physical hazards of life in a village like Vasilika. Children are kept from getting too close to the fires, to the oven, to other peoples' dogs; they are protected from the harsh effects of the weather. In addition, however, there are the hazards created by the behavior of other human beings. A woman suckling her infant, for example, may let the baby almost start to suck, then pull herself away, then let the child start again, then pull herself away. She may repeat these actions three or four times, talking and laughing as she does so, finally permiting the baby to suckle contentedly only after it has exhibited some discomfort by whimpering or squirming within its swaddling bands.

Such action is the beginning of a long series of similar teasing incidents in early childhood, sometimes connected with food, sometimes with other matters. A father of a two-year-old boy may call him over to have some of the sweet preserve that is being served to guests. The child runs eagerly to his father's knee. The father touches the spoonful of sweet to the child's mouth and as the boy opens his mouth to take the food, the father snatches the spoon away. He may repeat this several times until the child starts to cry. Then he lets the child eat, and hugs and pats him telling him he is a good boy.

In a different kind of situation, several boys of eighteen or nineteen encouraged the three-year-old brother of one of them to start a physical fight with his equally small cousin. The older boys shouted encouragement and made them intensify the pummelling of each other to the point where the children were knocking each other down and bruising themselves on the stones and rough earth of the yard. The little boys started to cry; the older boys laughed and then, still laughing, took the children into their arms and hugged and kissed them, calling them by endearing names. On one occasion, when a government agricultural extension agent was in the village injecting chickens against Newcastle's disease, a father lifted his little two-year-old son into the air, turned him upside down with the child's back facing the agent, and laughingly told

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

THE WATERS OF MARAH

178 795 576 Embrace one another, and join mutually the side of the Mouth or Cheek to the other . . . and since the Resurrection of Christ is the Miracle of Miracles, and the main Pillar of our Christian Faith and Hope, I am much perswaded that this might be the very manner and way of giving the Holy Kiss amongst the Primitive Christians."

178 795 788 [771] Nor is all this a matter of mere outward forms. Through all the vicissitudes of her history the Greek Church has been enabled to preserve something of the very spirit of the first age of Christianity. Her liturgy still enshrines that element of sheer joy in the resurrection of the Lord that we find in so many of the early Christian writings. The spirit of the ancient fathers of the Church lives on in the liturgy and in the piety of the ordinary Greek Christian. To enter into the spirit of the eastern liturgies is to comprehend as is possible in no other way the characteristic notes of Orthodox spirituality.

This is true above all of the liturgy of Holy Week and Eastertide; here one is perhaps most acutely conscious of the revolution that has been wrought in post-mediaeval western piety. It is a far cry from the Byzantine liturgy of the holy passion to that preoccupation with the sufferings of Christ with which we are familiar. Even in the darkness of the holy and great Friday the note of joy is sounded; the narrative of the passion is interspersed with the divine praises: it is the record of the triumph of the King, and Christ the Victor reigns in royal purple from His throne on Calvary.

[539]

To-day is hanged upon the Tree
He who hanged the earth free in the midst of the waters.
A crown of thorns crowns Him who is King of the angels.
He who wraps the heavens in clouds
is wrapt about with the purple of mockery;
He who freed Adam in Jordan
is smote with hands;
He who is the Bridegroom of the Church
is transfixed with nails;
He who is the Son of the Virgin
is pierced with a spear.
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ;
Show us also Thy glorious Resurrection!

[771] It is because her life is rooted so completely in the liturgy that the

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

Orthodox Church has been able to preserve in all its integrity the faith once delivered to the saints. Ecclesiastical organisation has never in eastern Christendom been looked upon as having an importance such as, at any rate from the eleventh century onwards, it assumed in the west. Provided only that he is free to participate fully in the liturgical life of his local church, the Greek or Russian Christian is prepared to sit curiously lightly to matters of jurisdiction and the machinery of ecclesiastical government and administration. Even when, as in the U.S.S.R. to-day, the Church is subject to every imaginable restriction save this bare permission to celebrate the divine mysteries, she can yet contrive to hold fast to her traditions with a tenacity which must often strike the western Christian as little short of miraculous: "the stable perseverance in these our days of the *Greek* Church", wrote Rycaut in the seventeenth century, "notwithstanding the Oppression and Contempt put upon it by the *Turk* . . . is a Confirmation no less convincing than the Miracles and Power which attended its first beginnings."

So, throughout the long centuries of Turkish domination, the Greek Church held fast the traditions which enshrined the saving truths of the divine economy. The Gospel was preached less by means of homilies and sermons than through the regular cycle of feast and fast; though Christian schools were maintained, often with great heroism in the face of overwhelming difficulties, the children of Hellas relied even more upon the visible catechism of the Church's liturgy. So it was that the faith was preserved as a royal treasure: the life of the mystical body burned on in secret, though the royal priesthood might be "expelled their Churches and those converted into Moschs; the Mysteries of the Altar conceal'd in secret and dark places . . ."

It is in remote townships like Kastoria that one can best enter into the spirit of the Greek Church under the Turkish yoke. To the traveller who approaches the ancient city of Diocletian from the southward there is little to suggest the presence of some seventy-two churches. Kastoria reveals its secrets only to those who are prepared to spend several days scrambling up and down the stony paths below the nineteenth-century metropolis, where tiny churches are set obscurely amidst the high, fortress-like domestic architecture of a later age. A great number of these churches date from Byzantine days, for from about the seventh century onwards this mountain township served as a place of exile for many whose presence at Constantinople was, for one reason or another, considered undesirable. Many more were built during the

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

178 795 346 centuries of Turkish dominion. Outwardly they are scarcely distinguishable from the cottages which surround them: only the shallow apse at the east end proclaims the church.

[532] Within, however, one finds oneself in another world. Walls unpierced by windows are covered with paintings which set forth the whole story of creation and redemption. Patriarchs and prophets mingle with the saints of the new dispensation; Elias is caught up to heaven in a chariot of fire and Jonah goes down to the bottoms of the mountains with the weeds wrapped about his head; those whose names are honoured throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, Athanasius, Basil and Gregory the Divine, rub shoulders with local saints like St. George of Iannina and the Neo-Martyrs; the Lord Christ is baptised in Jordan, He changes the water into wine and reigns in triumph from the tree of Calvary; the Holy Spirit descends in tongues of fire upon the apostles. Here in these little chapels—"rather like Vaults or Sepulchres than Churches, having their Roofs almost levelled with the Superficies of the Earth, lest the most ordinary exsurgency of structure should be accused for triumph of Religion, and to stand in competition with the lofty Spires of the *Mahometan* Moschs"—the mysterious life of the local church was nourished throughout the dark days of oppression; the saints which were in Kastoria, like their brethren at Thessalonica, obeyed the apostolic injunction to hold fast the traditions which they had been taught.

178 795 788 771 Not infrequently, it must be confessed, zeal for the preservation of the faith in the midst of an alien environment gave rise to a certain lack of discrimination. The pure gold of the apostolic tradition has not been handed down from generation to generation without gathering to itself certain accretions of doubtful worth, and the simple Christian is not always able to distinguish the one from the other or prepared even to admit the possibility of such intermingling.

> This Reverence to the Church [observes one of the old writers] produces a firm belief and strict adherence to the Articles of it, and to all the Ceremonies and matters the most minute and indifferent, not suffering the least change or alteration in them. For although they are sensible (as many of their Priests have confessed to me) of the inconvenient length of their Liturgies . . . and of many superstitious Customs and Ceremonies derived to them from the times of *Gentilism*, which are now ingrafted into, and as it were grown up

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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with their Religion, and many other Rites of which the wiser men are ashamed, and wish they were amended; yet they fear to correct and alter them . . . lest the People observing their Guides to vary in the least point from their ancient, and (as they imagine) their Canonical Profession, should begin to suspect the truth of all, and from a doubt dispute themselves into an indifference, and thence into an entire desertion of the Faith.

The dispute about the substitution of the Gregorian calendar for the Julian has shown that a substantial body of opinion (especially amongst the monks of Athos), is still violently opposed to change and reform even in matters which might to the detached observer seem to have little religious significance. With the solitary exception of 'modernist' Vatopedi, the whole monastic community of the holy mountain still insists on using the old reckoning. Elsewhere in Greece one finds scattered groups of Old Calendarists who have separated themselves from the local bishop rather than accept the reformed calendar. The *Palaioemerologitai*, as they are known, include clergy and monks and until recently were in possession of several small convents.

Though it may be that political motives have played a certain part in this curious controversy, it would be rash to deny the presence of a strong element of sincere religious feeling. Even the saints are liable to be involved in these disputes about the calendar. Witness the story of the 'modernist' *papas* who ventured to sing a hymn in honour of St. George before the eikon of the saint on the new-fangled day, and was not a little disconcerted when the saint fell flat on his face: what clearer testimony could there be to the detestation felt for the new calendar in the heavenly places?

The centuries of oppression did but strengthen the awareness (already more marked amongst eastern Christians than in the clerkly west), that the maintenance of holy tradition is the responsibility of the whole body of the faithful—not of the clergy alone. The English layman still feels himself more or less at the mercy of the parson—so far at least as what goes on in his parish church is concerned. Not so the Greek. A *papas* who ventured to deviate in the least particular from the forms prescribed by immemorial custom would suffer prompt correction from his congregation. If a bishop should fall into strange novel doctrines contrary to the traditions of the fathers, the holy people of God would rise up and denounce him. In this, as in other matters,

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THE WATERS OF MARAH

the effect of the Turkish dominion was to foster—perhaps to excess—an attitude which was already discernible in Byzantine days and which always made for a certain liveliness in ecclesiastical affairs.

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During the last few years it has been becoming increasingly clear that the episode which may, for the sake of brevity, be referred to as '1054 and all that' has gained a far more important place in our text-books of European history than it justly merits. No longer is it possible to regard the schism of Cerularius as marking the decisive breach between eastern Christendom and the west. A date which seemed to hold out to the struggling schoolboy a refuge no less secure than that of the Conqueror's triumph at Hastings has been swept away, to leave him floundering in the troubled waters of speculation and surmise. But whatever the immediate causes of the disastrous breach which was to divide Christendom into warring factions, and which underlies all our western divisions, there can be little question that far the greatest factor in the hardening of the schism was the invasion of the Levant by the crusading Franks, the sack of Constantinople and the establishment of a Latin hierarchy. These unhappy events made an impression upon the Greek mind that the passing of eight centuries has not effaced.

The legend of Frankish aggression—unhistorical and confused though it be—lives on in our own day especially amongst the monks. Pope Innocent III, Michael Palaeologus, the Patriarch Bekkos, the Catalans who established themselves in the Kassandra peninsula at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and Pope Eugenius IV, who flourished more than a century later, are all confounded in a wild farrago of monkish imagination and prejudice. The Pope, attended by Frankish soldiers and executioners, presides over the martyrdom of the twenty-six monks of Zographou, and terrible stories are still to be heard on the holy mountain of the gruesome fate that befell the renegade monks who took part in the Latin mass at the Lavra. In a painting at the Serbian convent of Chilandari the Pope appears in the company of Mahomet and the arch-heretic Arius, and the earth opens and swallows them up together.

The traveller in monastic Greece must not, therefore, be surprised to find that an unwary allusion to the Pope can still conjure up in the imagination of a Greek monk a nightmare figure far surpassing the inventions of the most rabid Protestant. I recall one such reference to

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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HEAVEN UPON EARTH

> Let the Christian consider well when he enters the church that he is entering into another heaven. That same majesty of God which is in heaven is also in His church, and on this account the Christian must needs enter with reverence and fear.
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> From a *Synopsis* printed at Venice in 1857

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DR. COVEL, it must be confessed, looked with a somewhat jaundiced eye upon the liturgical performances of the Greeks of Constantinople—the "jolly Easterlings," as he styles them. Not for him the wondering awe of the emissaries of the Prince of Kiev who, seven centuries before his advent as chaplain to King Charles' ambassador at the Sublime Porte, had been present at a celebration of the divine liturgy of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, in the great church of the Emperor Justinian, and had not known whether they were yet on earth or in heaven by reason of its surpassing splendour.

"A miserable Jumble, or patcht Piece of Service", says Covel, "so confused and so tedious, as it takes away all Devotion"; not to be compared with the chaste dignity of that incomparable liturgy whose compilers "with wonderful Prudence and sound Judgment did distinguish, or rather . . . garble the Offices of Greeks and Latins: and retaining and adding only such things as might promote true Piety and primitive Devotion, did cast away all the rest."

The good Doctor was plainly subject to the prejudices which are characteristic of most Frankish divines and travellers of his generation; and yet, making due allowance for a certain lack of sympathy in the face of an unfamiliar liturgical tradition, we must admit the substantial truth of his assertion that "the greatest part of the Easterlings' Oeconomy and discipline, especially of the Greeks, consist first in their Pomp and amusing Ceremonies at their Liturgies and other Offices . . . and in celebrating their Fasts and Feasts."

Nobody who has lived and worshipped amongst Greek Christians for any length of time but has sensed in some measure the extraordinary hold which the recurring cycle of the Church's liturgy has upon the piety of the common people. Nobody who has kept the great lent with

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where thoughts are crystallized into action. Here the political leaders meet their followers.

Every stranger, merchant, peddler, politician, government employee, or any other agent, goes first to the coffee house where he can get reliable information and pass on his mission.

The Orthodox religion has been enforced upon the people directly from the church. The religion is taught at the school, and church ceremonies are conducted in the church. The whole family goes to the church every Sunday morning and thus the child follows the elders in their religious beliefs. The church through its numerous holidays teaches something new to the people, brings up the people to it through various ceremonies. The child /32/ learns from father and mother that this or that holiday has this or that moral meaning to their lives. The school as a part of its religious education obliges every student with the teacher to attend church on Sundays and holidays. The teacher or the priest on such holiday occasions explains to the people the religious significance of the day and its practical application to their lives. Their Christian religion is unlike the Christian religion of many other sects. The Orthodox church believes in one God and in Christ as his son, but according to the nature of their demands they pray to special designated saints whom they think are able to help them. For example, for rain they pray to St. Ilias, who rides in a carriage and makes the thunder. For war they pray to St. Demeter. For travel on sea they pray to St. Nicola. For having a child to St. Nufrios. For sickness to St. Spyridion, etc. down the line. It is not so simple as the Protestant religion, nor so simple as Protestantism in that it depends much more on ceremonials. They take their religion seriously and believe in it completely.

When a cow or a member of a family gets sick, or the crop is not as promising, either the priest or another person next to the priest will be called to offer prayer. /33/ The priest is the representative of the Saints through whom they communicate with God. Religion makes a large part of their activity and thus the youngsters as they grow, fit themselves in it and take their respective places.

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makes his prayer every evening and morning, occupies the eastern corner of the house. The ikon of the Saint is well decorated with the best handwork. In front of the ikon hangs an oil lantern that burns day and night. The Saint guards the family, the animals, and blesses the crops. Usually members of the family bear the name of the Saint. [354] [553]

Once a month the priest visits the home of every farmer and brings the blessing of the coming month by sprinkling holy water in all the corners of the house. He passes in front of the ikon and utters a prayer in the name of the Saint for the safeguard, prosperity, and health of the family. [793] [788] [782]

Religion for these people is a necessity of life. Without it they cannot live. In every phase of /78/ their lives religion plays an important part as in recreation, farming, traveling or even in fighting they have their respective Saint through whom they communicate with God. 771 776 182

When Paul entered the temple of the unknown God and preached the known God to the Greeks, he must have forgotten to mention to them the form of worship they should adopt. The Greeks have accepted the theory of Christianity of one God but have dressed up this new religion with their old forms of worship. They have changed the names of ancient gods and given them new names with the same duty as the old ones. Thus Saint Nicholas replaced the god of the sea, Poseidon. 788 776

Since 1453, which marks the fall of Constantinople to the Turks and the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the Christian people of the Near East have gone through the severest test in Christian history. The continuous persecution, massacres, deportations, and all kinds of inhuman methods could not desecrate it. In fact the Christian faith got stronger and stronger and had become a bond of uniting the Christians. The same strong ties in this religion strengthened them to overthrow the bonds of slavery, after 400 years. It /79/ was religion that kept the Greek letters, the language of the people, and it was their strong belief in the power 175 795 [619]

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of the Saints and Christ that made them often take extremely dangerous steps against their conquerors. The leaders of the churches became victims of the cruelty, but at last these very same persecuted priests started the revolt and gave freedom to the Greek people. Thus religion is a part of our nationalism, it is a part of our freedom and a part of our struggle for existence. I do not think any Christian people have undergone the test for Christianity that the Greek people did. If one goes back deep into the causes of the present Greek stubbornness in resisting the impossible and standing by their promise up to the end to help England, we will find it again in their religion.

As long as people live in the religion they have developed throughout centuries they cannot be conquered.

Faith in time of trouble. For every trouble there is a remedy and there is some source that will come to aid. Long dry seasons often lead the people to /80/ all day and night prayers to Saint Ilias for rain. When members of the family get sick, the priest offers prayer. The people strongly believe in the mercifulness and forgiveness of God. All occurrences, good or bad, come from God and He rewards and punishes people according to their deeds. Possibly for people who are not contaminated with the explanation that science gives to many phenomena, it is better for them to have blind faith and hope for the solution of their troubles.

The church. The church occupies the central part of the village and has a large yard around it. Its steeple is wooden and temporarily keeps the bells that call the people to the morning and evening church services. The bells also serve for a fire alarm as well as school time for the children. When the people left their countries they left behind livestock, furniture, and many valuable things, but they succeeded in bringing with them the ikons and the church bells. Some of the ikons date back to the 16th century. The lower parts of the ikons are worn out from the kisses received in the church. The people have great pride in their church and in the power of their ikons to perform miracles. Regardless of

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their humble houses and subsistence level of living the people like to build beautiful churches with high steeples and decorate them /81/ with as many ikons and church bells they can. The people [316] of Megali Vrisi not being satisfied with the structure of the present church have already quarried stone from the nearby hills for their [794] future church structure. When the farmers were notified to offer personal work for the church they did it without complaint.

The people look up to the church as an institution which gives 771● them hope and courage in times of disappointment and discouragement. Once a year a confession is made in the church in front [783] of the ikons and the priest. People tell of their bad acts and [796] forgive those that caused them trouble. All wedding ceremonies, baptisms and name day celebrations take place in the church.

Attendance. Women and children attend the church regularly. 794 The men are rather irregular in their attendance. This is not 796 due to their negligence nor to their failure to respect the church, but is due to the long church services that last for three hours. The people get tired of going to the church. Most attend the last part of the services. In spite of the variety of music and ceremonial activities, the church is losing /82/ attendance. Men like to know what they hear in the church, and since it is all abstract to them they prefer to stay out and send their wives and children.

With the increase of modern scientific beliefs by the farmers, the church will be forced to change its course and adopt itself to the new social changes.

The membership is obligatory. Every one born in the village 794 becomes a member. It is not necessary to keep in books the names of the members since the whole population of the village naturally belongs to the church.

Contributions. Every family has to contribute for the support of the priest and for the upkeep of the church. This contribution is paid in kind. Besides this the church has voluntary donations [769] by people whose prayers are answered, and by others for the

871 Not all the older peasants attended school as children, or attended
[212] it for more than three or four years; and often what literacy they
did have was lost in the course of time, because they had no op-
[217] portunity to use it. There are no libraries in the villages or in most
of the provincial centres. There is also no pattern of reading the Bible,
[779] which has maintained reading knowledge in other lands. In Greece
the translation of the Bible into modern Greek was forbidden until
recent years. The men, however, do read the newspapers with care,
829 when they find them, and they have a detailed knowledge and a private
[521] opinion on international and national events and policies; politics,
well understood, forms the basis of most discussions, in village or
city. The satire on the Court of Petty Offences reports a case where
two simple workers on the bus, engrossed in a discussion of the
Spanish Civil War, use the perspiring back of another passenger as
the map of Spain upon which to follow the manoeuvres of the two
armies. The incident is amusing, but not surprising to Greek readers.
A book on nutrition urges housewives to pattern their planning on
the principles of the British monarchy, not those of the Italian
monarchy, assuming knowledge of the principles underlying the
difference.

517 In the cities, there is much intellectual activity on a high level.
Many people write articles or poems or stories for their own satis-
faction in their leisure time. Conversation presupposes wide reading.
[814] The inexpensive paper-bound volumes of Greek works, as well as of
translations of foreign works, old and contemporary, make such
904 reading possible. There are 10 daily papers in Athens, and a number
of magazines catering to literary tastes, or addressed to simpler
people. Magazines carry reports of new scientific developments
throughout the world, and a number of educational articles. Those
addressed to the *cosmakis*, the simple people, carry articles on child
and maternal care, have cooking and sewing hints, as well as columns
of personal advice. The newspapers maintain a high literacy and
scholarly standard.

RELIGION

● 779 Religion and the Church are almost synonymous for the Greeks;
795 and the Greek Orthodox religion is entirely synonymous with Greek-
619 ness. When the Greek says: "Is he a Christian?" he means "Is he a
Greek?" The Greek Church is the main factor in Greek continuity
among emigrants nowadays. Throughout the past centuries, the
Church has maintained Greek consciousness in many communities
in Asia Minor, where the people spoke Turkish as a mother tongue
and followed Turkish customs. The few Protestant Greeks occupy
an ambiguous position and find it difficult to explain that they are
really Greek since they do not conform to the tradition of
Greekness.

really Greek, since they do not conform to the tradition of Greekness.

Religion permeates Greek life, punctuating it with ritual. No Greek, urban or rural, would think of initiating anything important without a religious inauguration. Schools open with the inaugurative *agiasmos*, "making holy"; the foundation stone of every house is laid with *agiasmos*; merchants begin new undertakings with the proper religious inauguration. On Epiphany, the sea is made holy for those who journey on it. In the country, blessed water is carried from the Epiphany Mass to sprinkle on the fields. The Virgin and the Saints are invoked, but not mainly as correctives; their main function is to endow an undertaking with good and success, it is not primarily to prevent or correct. When a loved man, husband, son, brother, father, beloved, goes away with the merchant marine, or in the sponge-fishery, a woman makes a vow to the appropriate saint, to be fulfilled on the safe return. The islands are studded with small chapels which were promised on such occasions. However, priests are called in, and Saints and the Virgin invoked, also, when difficulties arise. Vows are made for the recovery of a loved one; the priest is called when the family has had a run of misfortune, to "make holy" and exorcise the evil. Priests conduct a rain litany to break a drought.

Traditionally, Sunday services are attended regularly by women and children, perhaps less faithfully by the men. Ceremonials, however, draw the entire family. The ritual is not bolstered by strict limits of time or rules of silence. Mass starts in due course, a little early or a little late, not on the dot of an appointed time. Children run in and out between the aisles, and mothers whisper endearments to babies. A woman will break into a dirge during the Good Friday Mass of the Epitaph, mourning the death of Christ, or adressing herself in sympathy to the bereaved Virgin. The Mass before the midnight preceding Easter is tense with expectation; there is great release and spontaneous joy when Christ is announced to be risen, and the "Christ is risen!" with which all are greeted is a true, joyous message, full of the wonder and the reassurance of the renewed miracle; the candles lighted from the sacred light at this time are carried home with true concern for saving the flame from extinction.

Religion is so firmly entrenched and unquestioned that it can be taken with casualness and a lack of self-conscious effort. It is accepted and ever-present like the air. One talks about Masses and preparations for litanies, but not about religion. Religion is not a personal matter, nor is it a guide to conduct. People consult the priest, but in matters of human relations, or, at any rate, relations which are regarded as secular, not because they are assailed by doubts. Young men do not talk about the meaning of Christ in their lives, nor do young girls dream of entering a convent. On the other hand, the Saints and the Virgin often figure in speech: a man singing of his beloved likens her neck to an altar, her arms to church tapers, or he tells her that he worships her like the Virgin.

he worships her like the Virgin. A derisive Dodecanese anti-Mussolini song, composed during Italian occupation, makes casual reference to God and the beloved Virgin of the Island.

HEALTH

The stock phrase for beginning a Greek letter is "We have health and health we wish for you." A frequent form of greeting and good-bye is "Health to you", and this is also said to anyone who sneezes. Anyone wearing a new article of clothing is greeted with the wish that he wear it with health. The question "How are you? Are you well?" asked upon a meeting with someone, are real questions, requiring an answer. Health is good and important, it is desired, but it is not a preoccupation. The wish for health is not a sanction; one of the child care manuals uses this sanction in urging mothers not to let their young children play with the neighbourhood children for fear of contracting infections, but the other urges the mothers not to worry about microbes, since association with others is of primary importance. In general, however, health is not a motivation in nutrition, recreation, or housing. And human relations are definitely more important. It is terrible to send a member of the family to the hospital unless, of course, it is necessary for an operation. Because of this attitude, tuberculosis often spreads through the family, since very often not even the barrier of self-protection will be introduced between the ailing and the well. Added to this is the fear that, if tuberculosis is known to be in the family, it will be hard to get a son-in-law. However, if an operation is required, a woman will go alone from a village to a hospital in Athens. There is no rejection by her family involved here; in addition, the pattern of fortitude is evoked.

In general, people do not go to a doctor unless something is very wrong. They do not go for a general check-up, although the habit of going to maternal and well-baby clinics is gaining ground. If anyone is unwell, home remedies are first resorted to, and probably the wise woman who knows about herbs is called in. The manuals on child care have long sections, covering about a third of the book, on home care and the diagnosis of disease; and they urge the use of traditional remedies: cupping, the use of camomile and other herbs. When a serious illness is recognized, the doctor is called and vows are made to the Virgin or the appropriate Saint; a mother may vow a foot pilgrimage, or 40 daily obeisances over a period of time, or the gilding of the hands of an ikon. Much illness arises from the evil eye or magic spells, and can be counteracted by magical practices.

The tuberculosis division of the UNRRA mission to Greece reports the impression that there was only one half the amount of tubercu-

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Greece EH1

To the Land of the Eagle

769 792 the family is always a priest and has charge of the church in which the relics rest, and, as I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of a Greek lady who knew the family well, I was able to arrange through her to visit the church on a certain morning and to have the sarcophagus opened for my benefit. She accompanied me herself, and brought with her two friends, a young man and a young woman, who had begged to be allowed to join the party on what was evidently a very unusual occasion.

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PRIEST OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The interior of the church[1] was cool and pleasant after the yellow glare of the Corfu streets. From the painted roof hung magnificent lamps of hammered silverwork, and on the shining parquet floor stood two massive candelabra—offerings, like the lamps, from those who had benefited, or believed they had benefited, by the intercession of the saint. As is customary in the Greek Church, there were no pews or chairs other than seats round the wall, and the building gained greatly in dignity by their absence. Pictures, deep-toned and mellow with age, decorated the walls.

● 771 While we were waiting for the sacristan to announce our arrival to the priest, a constant stream of worshippers entered the church—men, women, and children. With every appearance of devotion, they made a pilgrimage from one sacred object to the other, kissing each in turn, and finally entering

1 [containing relics of Spiridi'-150 one, see cat. 116, pp. 149-150.--Analyst]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Greece EH1

Priestcraft

the little shrine which shelters the sarcophagus of Spiridione, 771 ● to kneel there and pray. The evident genuineness of their faith was impressive, and I began to feel rather ashamed of the vulgar curiosity which was the chief reason for my presence.

The great moment arrived, and we in our turn went 764 into the shrine. The sarcophagus[1] rich with embossed silverwork and jewels, shone in the light of the candles which surrounded it. It stood on a raised dais or step, and seemed to fill the whole space, so big was it and so small the shrine. We four stood in a row, with our backs to the entrance. There was room for us and for one other worshipper, and no more. The latter, a woman, knelt devoutly in the gloom beside us. One by one my companions crossed themselves and reverently kissed the sarcophagus. Then we waited in silence.

The priest and his acolyte came in by a side door. The 769 priest, a tall and exceedingly good-looking man of grave mien and dignified aspect, took up his position at one end of the sarcophagus. The acolyte stood at the other. With slow and reverent movements, the priest unlocked the lid, raised it, and let down the side which faced us. He then opened a square panel in the upper surface of the coffin, and placed near it a saucer containing something that resembled dried leaves, possibly a disinfectant. Each gesture, each deliberate movement, conveyed the idea of intense devotion and intense reverence—and yet this man, this officiating priest, was actually the owner of the relics before him, and

1[of Spiridone, see cat. 116, pp. 149-151 --Analyst] 151